(YORK'S FOLK-BOOK No. 1)

The Undefended Border *A Story by*

Claire Mumford

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COPY 1

THE World's most significant monument to PEACE is not the idle palace at the Hague.

It is a monument not made by hands, not visible to the eye, though it is big enough for all men to see and as high as Heaven is high --a monument for all peoples to emulate, yet a monument that is only an imaginary line,-- the line that is the border between the two greatest nations on Earth,--a border without a fort, without a ship, without an armed man to preserve its integrity--

THE UNDEFENDED BORDER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

CLAIRE MUMFORD

August, 1914

Sold for the benefit of the FATHERLESS Children of the Armies of FRANCE

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First published, February, 1917

September, 1914

This unimportant story is dedicated to the

EMINENT ORATOR

who, by quoting the foregoing words of the author, conferred distinction upon them.

February, 1917

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I

The crowd dining on the Terrace of the Chateau had been in the House that afternoon—it was the second day of the Extraordinary Session—and we were still in the glamour of Laurier's speech, even Colonel Washington whom I had forcibly restrained when the Floor assaulted their desks because a Frenchman's call to England's sons made them feel that way:

"We Canadians are fussy about decorum. The galleries must be seen and not heard,"

I explained to the Colonel, who is a bit inclined to preach that American Customs are good enough for anybody. No wonder! With a name like a Handy Compendium of United States History—Randolph Lee Washington.

There was no doubt of it—the current that runs around the Empire was running strong, carrying us all along with it. The Terrace twanged like violin strings when the bow has just been lifted, vibrated with the British Empire note that Laurier had sounded so well—with such a thrill on the high G string of patriotism.

Sir Pierce had come back from the Lobby with the last editions.

"Here's the speech! All of it. And very decent it was of Laurier, I must say!"

We had been trying to remember exactly what Sir Wilfrid had said.

Sir Pierce swallowed his coffee in one gulp; (You may

know—I don't—why the English usually let their coffee get lukewarm and take it that way—like a dose,) then he began to read aloud in his nice Oxford accent. You *know* —that sort of English which doesn't seem to be laboring under so great a strain as usual.

"It is our 'Jewty'—ah! Ah! h'm!—Etceterah! Etceterah! "to let Great Britain know and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart." H'm! Ahh! That's not exactly what I was lookin' for.—"But here we have it!"

"She"——

"Canada, you know, he means," Sir Pierce politely explained. "She has engaged in this war, not from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandisement, but to maintain untarnished the honor of her name, to maintain her treaty obligations and to save Civilisation from the unbridled lust of power and of conquest." Etceterah, Etceterahh. "Long we have enjoyed the benefits of our British citizenship. Today it is our jewty to accept its responsibilities and its sacrifices!!!"

Sir Pierce stopped short and nobody at our table said anything.

"Ra-th-er!" came from the table behind us.

"And Sir Pierce, as soon as you get home, tell England from me that Canada can send five hundred thousand picked men—and will—if England needs them!"

It was said in as low a tone as the Personage in Authority can manage to get out of his big chest, but it resounded abroad because it came in the midst of one of the worrying, gnawing little silences, worse than a noise, which were running in and out of our talk.

Of course, Mrs. Spencer glowed at this—everybody basks

in the rays of the Personage—nevertheless, those unsympathetic, dull little silences were Susan Maria Randolph Spencer's fault—Susan Maria, ordinarily known as Happy and only very extraordinarily, at a christening or a wedding or something of that sort, as Susan.

Everybody who knows Happy knows, whether they admit it or not, that she makes the atmosphere, wherever she is, exactly what she chooses to have it. So when we got as far as coffee even Mother admitted that the cool little breeze of neutrality blowing now and again across our table was Happy's inspiration.

But I knew it when the jellied gumbo came on because between us from the first—and I knew her long before she married my cousin Jim, there has always been an understanding so complete that we hardly ever need to say it, whatever it is. And I was puzzled, for Happy is as tingling and responsive as a wind harp and answers like a pipe organ to a big theme. The repressed drama, the poise and grace of Laurier's performance were exactly the sort of thing that her cosmopolitan spirit finds "worthwhile" in whatever country she may find it.

Perhaps Sir Pierce had been too near the edge that day? We jolly well knew why we were always dining with him, why he had come to Ottawa, why before August 4 he had been so vague about his shooting dates in Alberta, why he was not already on his way home to get in line at the War Office since England had such urgent need of officers and he is a Colonel, and a D. S. O.

Perhaps Happy was making it plain that she is an American and means to stay one the rest of her life—that she had had enough of Englishmen and English soldiers—God help her! But Sir Pierce Lovelly would be another sort

of story, different from Jim, and worthwhile from any angle. The Lovelly family thread has a catskin earl running in it and Sir Pierce long ago came into his baronetcy and several good houses. And a very decent chap to boot, in spite of his being so outrageously good looking and what Happy calls so "ineradicably English."

By which I understand her to mean that caste is the steel framework of English life and that class is in the very marrow fat of an Englishman's bones.

"Except the top-shelf ones—"

I always tell her. "They are the simplest, least self-conscious persons on earth because they never happened to see anyone who is any better than they are, so they never give the question a thought."

Which is exactly the manner and build of Sir Pierce. It has never occurred to him that anybody might be any better than he is, nor any worse for that matter. He is simple and direct and interested and courteous and generous.

Now if you know any better way than that of being a gentleman I don't. So let it go at that.

And you may take Happy's word for it, too. She says that before she met Sir Pierce she never knew exactly what an aristocrat meant, because she had met a cowboy in Texas and a paper hanger in New York and a chauffeur in France and a newsboy in Chicago—all of whom had been gentlemen; and she had met a king who seemed to her an affable snob of the bourgeois class, so it "had mixed her up on the aristocrat question."

"But then I am only an American woman, so how can I be expected to know,"

She adds with malice in my direction because I am half-American by virtue of the most charming aristocrat in all

the world—my little Boston mother whom Happy covets so much that she used to threaten to marry me for the sake of acquiring a half-interest in her.

When Sir Pierce stopped reading he turned to Happy to get back his own thrill intensified, made exquisite—the way Happy gives back any thought, any feeling that you give to her.

I waited with curiosity, for her answer—Sir Pierce had said,

"Laurier put it well, eh. The way we're feelin'—what we're fightin' for?"

Not since the first minute—Happy and I were in the Chateau lobby when the clerk pinned up the bulletin:

"ENGLAND HAS DECLARED WAR"—

had I been able to get out of her anything more partisan than her hatred of all militarism, an indifferent flap now and then of her American neutrality.

Yet I did not know then nor did I think that she knew, whether or no she had any right to call herself an "American citizen."

Jim was—or is—an Englishman and she had not divorced him—not yet. And if he is alive he is likely to be an important Englishman for I see that Evan Spencer, the Guardsman is listed "Killed in action," and that Langley, the other cousin, is in Paris with a deadly wound.

Jim might be dead—of course—I had not heard for many years, nor she, I think, for ten—but I wondered that night if she had seen and remembered what these deaths would mean to Jim.

I have never dared to speak of the English part of the family, much less of Jim. But now that it is war again

and I have a heartache and smarting eyes because I am forty-nine and stiff-elbowed from a Boer bullet and the Minister of Militia will have none of me—she must know that I want to talk about the old days—and Jim.

For Jim had his glory days. One morning all over the Empire, Englishmen's necks stiffened because the papers were telling that a young English officer with only twenty men had taken a Boer battery of three guns and saved the battalion.

After that Young Jim was my personal hero. When the Canadians were brigaded under Smith-Dorrien I had the good luck to be in on Jim's second day—a rather special bit of war business that sent his name skyrocketting again and laid him up for two months and did something—I don't know what—to his nerves or his moral fibre, or something. I only know that I have seen war do it to older and wiser men than Jim—men without his Irish Devil-May-Care ancestry. Jim's mother was the O'Heartley heiress and the O'Heartleys are famous through the four Provinces for charm, devilment and long life.

For war—the war that I know anyway—sends a man's spirit off on a holiday and his body back to the brute in less time than many of us have confessed.

O yes! Just at first it makes him sense—drunk with excitement. After the reaction-the beast-sleep and the beast-hunger—he has the craving—excitement and more excitement, until twisting his bayonet to retrieve it from a chap's entrails doesn't make him feel much of anything, not even nausea.

But it was the endless, mouldering South African year after his second glory day that did it for Jim—when he was crazy-homesick for the wife, and dead-dull with anx-

iety because Happy was having it out without him, going through it alone. When he knew it was time for the baby I've caught him on his stomach gnawing his fingers in agony, and, of course, not saying anything. O! The English half of him was a perfect master of the technic of holding his tongue.

No wonder the English go off their head sometimes, fall down harder in reaction than other people, must have a Mafeking London night once in a century. Doubtless Freud, today, diagnoses them as a nation lunatic from suppressed reflexes.

Thanks be! The American half of me let me work off some of it in talk—in fat heavy, curses on the Boers and the English and the murderous climate and the horrible scorching dop that burned out our under-fed, shrivelled stomachs and made scarlet threads out of our nerves—for our moral messages to travel over.

I warned Jim that I saw it all getting hold of him, whiskey or dop when it ought to have been tea, gambling when it ought to have been sleep. He didn't even care much about a bath when the rare chance came. Everything decent seemed such a long way off. The other sort of thing, fine habits, fine food, fine ladies seemed as remote and improbable as Heaven. For it is true even if it is trite that habits and morals are pretty much the same thing.

And most of us hadn't a habit left except the habit of taking a drink when we were done up, which was most of the time—when we were not fighting.

And fighting—by then we were "seasoned troops"—was the most horrible of all the reactions—just an emergence of the sub-human, the beast lust for killing.

And take it from "one who has been there"—that is what

"seasoned troops" means: the nonchalant going into battle because the seasoned trooper remembers that when the fight is on the blood lust will rise in him and he will exult in killing, enjoy the fun of hunting in the pack.

"See that red-headed Boer bloke on a white horse, Dick?" Jim said to me after he was a major and didn't have to do any killing for himself.

"I'm going to pot him myself—make a nice messy little spill though. I never could stand red hair on a white horse." Jim dismounted, picked up a dead trooper's rifle—at least I hope that he was dead for he had a large hole where his eyes and nose ought to be, and began to snub-nose and cross cut some bullets before he put them in the magazine.

"Making a nice little dum-dum for his big tum-tum," he sing-songed.

"For God's sake, Jim! We English don't do that."

"O, yes we do. Kind sir, a few," he hummed.

Then he growled,

"We've seen enough of the damn Dutch dum-dums in our men's bellies, haven't we? Here's something on account, you——Boer."

Jim's eye ran along his sight. The big Boer stiffened and toppled forward, then rolled to the ground.

"Got him," said Jim, sucking in his lower lip, which was a little boy's trick he had when he didn't want his grin to show you just how pleased he was with himself.

And I suppose that nobody ever denied that Jim's smile was just what Happy used to say it was—

"The liveliest, dearest smile ever!"

It was because all of this—and more—the horrible "more" of Jim's year at home after the war, was running in my consciousness under the talk, that night on the Terrace,

that I tried to look into Happy's eyes when Sir Pierce stopped his reading of Laurier's high words. But her eyes were far off, across the Terrace wall, over the broad river, over the low lights of Hull—far out in the dark—the Dark that is the wide empty sweep of Canada, sweeping up, up to the North Pole.

But she answered lightly enough with a saucy flirt of her American neutrality.

"O! Yes! Sir Wilfrid can translate French into exquisite English, can't he? And wasn't it all sweetly perfumed with the scent of his English title?"

"O, you little cat with your skin-deep democracy!" said my sister Lutie.

Happy gave her back her dearest injured baby look and began to make a speech.

"O, I don't mean that Laurier isn't in it too! War is the one persistent delusion. We are all duped by the Glory Piper. Same old tune. But when he plays it we all dance to the music. We women dance hardest. We are always siccing you on. Waving flags and telling you to run along and do something heroic—a long way off from us where we can't see how dirty you are when you do it!"

One of those crawling little silences edged in here before she went on.

"But Canada is taking it hard, isn't she? She always takes everything that England gets—only harder. I remember that she took the Coronation hard. A much more severe case of Coronation than afflicted England." She turned to my sister,

"Why, Lutie, you remember the Jones-Cave-Joneses? Didn't they go about getting their clothes and steamer tickets with an air of solemn responsibility—as if they were

expected to polish up the Crown with their brand of plate polish—as if in fact the crown couldn't be used unless they got there to polish in person. And yesterday—in the Senate gallery? Didn't you feel it? I did—the fact that if nice Prince Princess Pat's big new hat hadn't got there on time, the British Empire would have slipped a cog?"

We chuckled at Happy. We always do. O, Yes. We spoil her—but Sir Pierce only smiled—with patience. She had evidently not yet got it, the English view point about this war—the right one, naturally. But now that he had come to explain it to her she would swing into line—where she belonged—of course—was she not the widow of an English soldier, a D. S. O., however unfortunate in his later habits.

Years ago it ran around London clubs that Jim had died somewhere off in South Africa. Happy has never contradicted it.

But as to her English sympathies—that night on the Terrace I was remembering the day before in the Gallery of the Senate when the Royalties seated themselves after the last note of "God save the King" died in the band.

"Rather solemn and business like this undress 'Opening' I had whispered to her. "The Duke's fine in his khaki. A bit like the real thing, eh?"

She had whispered back,

"Real Duke, of course. Connaught looks exactly like one. The only duke I ever happened to see who did. But I never felt more grown-up, more republican, in my life. The whole show seems exactly like the children's story—you know the Three Bears."

"Big sized chair for the Duke and the middling sized chair for the duchess and the little chair down on the floor

for Princess Patricia. And all of those really elegant backings and bowings of the Gentleman Black-Rod."

Later she had whispered,

"I like that—that's *human*."

"That," being the occasion of the Duchess's taking out of a case the duke's eyeglasses which she slipped to him when a back-bowing aide handed the duke his speech.

Also she had "Liked it," when the Duke saluted at the mention of the members of Parliament. When he uncovered she showed great interest. She said that she was trying to make out whether he uncovered at God's name or at the king's. Which was where, seeing that she had made up her mind to be naughty, I gave her over to her cousin, Colonel Washington, then, as always, since she wore pigtails, glad to have her on any terms,—I sometimes think, at any price—to any of us—even to her.

Not that Ran isn't a good sort, alertly good, almost as if he were afraid that he might not be good, if he let himself go.

He is Happy's second cousin once removed and although he and I have been chums—of a sort—for thirty years, I have often wished that he were so far removed that he could never get near her again.

But their cousinship is on the Southern side and the South takes cousins seriously. Still, he is a New Yorker of the very type itself. And New York is where he got his maternal grandfather's banking house and his hard-working stocks and bonds and his Yankee stick-at-iveness and his manner—a bit as if the whole Earth were a little thing that didn't belong to him yet—only because he hadn't yet taken the trouble to buy it.

There is absolutely quite nothing to be said against Ran,

Colonel Washington,—some sort of a decorative militia colonelcy, though he was graduated by West Point before he resigned to inherit the banking house. From the American view point and in fact, from all good fellows, Ran is a big bit of alright. Broad-girthed, and tall, quick-witted and quick-actioned and quick-spending when it is to save the other chap's money and straight as an Indian,—the way West Point turns them out. High powered and high geared he is, like the car he had brought over the week before "for Happy and me to play with," he said.

Which didn't exactly tickle me to death, for Happy had been pleased enough with our traps and rather smart-stepping cobs. But Ran always gets it all his way. Mother thought that she loathed motor cars. Ran has shown her that she was mistaken. She has graced the tonneau of that dust distributing instrument devised for gambling with Death, hours upon hours of every day since Ran imported it.

"Love it, Dick! Simply love it? Do see what you can get for the old pair, Dear?" She had said that morning.

I had been frank enough about the car, greeted him and it with,

"Darn you! Can't you let us have Happy to ourselves for just one month once a year?"

He had smiled—one of his most cheerful ones.

"Not on your sweet little, neat little lives, Dick! Though I like you all well enough to come by myself. But I'm going to get Happy for keeps pretty soon now, I think."

And that day, at luncheon alone with me at the club, he threw all his cards on the table.

"Tell me Dick, for God's sake, is Jim dead? But of course he is. I'd have heard—I've followed up every last

clue. She has never let me breathe Jim's name to her—would never speak to me again if I dared. But she is thinking about making it all legal—divorce for desertion and non-support. Backing and filling though. The aunts have taken the papers to her a dozen times. Always says "Not now. I'm very content." But she's weakening. The years begin to show up lonely ahead.

I don't know where Ran found it—in my eyes or manner, but he did.

"Dick! You believe that Jim's alive! If there's any proof man tell me. I'm all in. It's been a long pull—can't you see!"

I could. He was cafe-au-lait color about the chops, the way big ruddy men go pale.

"When did you hear? Where is he? But he isn't, I say! My detec—my men."

He was ashamed of the first word.

"I have looked everywhere the globe round. He's dead I tell you. Probably killed himself after Happy bolted—after the woman on the Channel boat . . ."

Jim didn't kill himself then. He isn't the sort to give up any fight—even with himself. He wanted to live—to disprove the woman story. There was never any other woman near his life after the first day that he saw Happy—I could swear to that, and never would be, not if he lived to be eighty.

But eight years ago I did know that he was alive. Alice—his sister, wrote to me, said that he was in South Africa under another name—making good, paying the old debts—he gambled away a matter of thirty thousand pounds, about all he had, in that first year at home. She said that he had not taken a drop of alcohol since Happy went away. She

wrote because Jim had told her to ask me to let her know if Happy wanted to divorce him—that he "wanted to make it easy for her."

I knew then what Jim meant to do for Happy in case she wanted to be free as I knew why he didn't do it at first—kill himself. He loved her too much to let her have the least twinge of remorse. And—yes—I know this, too. If Jim is still alive he believes that Happy may still care a little—in spite of everything.

Nobody could love as they two had loved without that sort of faith. It used to be like having the best music played on your own nerves—just to be in the same room with them.

Of course Happy was the most vitally lovely of all the American girls who have bewildered and bewitched Englishmen. . . . .

But Heaven knows she is lovelier today with the sweet faint lines of Jim's hard lessons written on her face. Pluck and sweetness! Anybody can see that she has taken it all that way, all that Jim taught her. D—m him!

No! I cant! I liked him more than other men. And sometimes it seems to me that anyone who has liked Jim must like him to the end. I wonder . . .

But of course she must loathe him. In spite of all his dread of her knowing, of his running to cover, at last she saw him drunk—beastly drunk. And she was born with a peculiar horror of drunkenness.

She must forget Jim—if she hasn't. She must marry one of these two Highly Desirables—Ran, I think. . . . She isn't young, though she will always be younger than anybody else—by the grace of her vital spirit. And she has only a lean little income and she is too much alone be-

cause she is so infernally proud that she will not let any of us amuse her when it costs much to do it.

And she is loving hearted and big-souled and full of great "Humanity" schemes that need a big background, a big fortune—power and place—like Ran's. And she has a child hunger and a cruel scar where she lost the boy. He was a year old—died a month before Jim got home.

Because of all these things missing in her life, that day at luncheon I did not tell Ran of my sure knowledge of Jim, eight years back.

But at the time I had answered Alice with news of Happy's contentment. Five years ago, in London, Alice told me that soon after Jim's first letters he had paid the debts on the house and gone away from his first address in South Africa—that letters came back unopened. London clubs gossipped about his death, some untraceable rumor, but there were really no facts to go on. She did not, somehow, feel that he was dead. Neither did I. Nor do I now. . . .

2

It had been on the day of the opening of the Session that I nearly decided for Ran and America against the field,—meaning Sir Pierce Lovelly—*if*—if only it isn't still Jim—

We had sauntered down through the Parliament gardens and foregathered for tea under the awning on the Terrace of the Chateau. Happy waved the teapot enthusiastically all over us without damage to anyone's clothes, the law of gravity, of course, makes allowances for Happy.

"Really you are fine, you Colonials! How you play up!"

Kipling always says everything for you. It was just like it—"The Song of the Sons" wasn't it. She chanted,

"Count, are we feeble and few?
Hear, is our speech so rude?
Look, are we poor in the land?
Judge, are we men of the Blood?"

"So you did like it today, you Minx?" I said. But she wouldn't notice my existence even by so much as putting the sugar in my tea. I had to do it myself. She went on with what she calls her "impartial observations."

"Fifty million dollars you are going to vote to the old mother England tomorrow, aren't you? That is why we had this pretty show today. But, I think that I like our simple ceremonies better.

"Why, we inaugurate a president of ninety millions odd without any fuss at all. And it *is* impressive—the deep-cut kind of impression, though it is all just plain black coats and a plain bible and a plain oath."

"Yes," Ran rapped out. "But it's a mighty big fine oath if it is plain. And that's all good enough for us, eh, Happy?" His eyes blazed at her though his eyes rarely blaze; the small, efficient, crackled gray-ice eyes that seem to have been evolved as the type-eyes of the Successful American Man.

She smiled and waggled her bronze head but she flicked away the question and the sparks as she always flicks away that sort of thing from any man. At the minute I thought —"If it is Jim still I'd go and find him, bring him back to her—if he is fit—if he has washed himself inside and out of the drunkenness and the gambling. If the Spencer will, that good serviceable firm-fibred Spencer specialty is on

top again, as it always was before those two years of the war.

It was a long year afterward before she knew the full tale of the War's gift to her, that her husband was an Alcoholic and a "confirmed gambler" who must play all night seven nights a week to still his craving for excitement at fever pitch,—a nervous, jumpy invalid who must fill his days with more excitement or with sodden sleep.

Before the war his days and nights had been full of her, of fast-growing duties of citizenship and clean sport—of clean habits.

Jim had just begun to run politically when the war called him. After the war, for the first six months the leaders tried to get him back into harness. It looked,—the Big One's said—as if his hero performances might help him to climb far up the ladder.

Then it began to leak, to trickle through the season's gossip. "York-Spencer was drinking, taking a week off now and then to sober up, away from his wife who swallowed the lies. (Don't you believe it!) York-Spencer was playing a sensational game—stiffer than any man's in town, losing ten thousand pounds in one week—twenty hour sittings, though."

And then when everything crashed, the nasty story of a woman on a channel boat and Happy meeting them, head-on, and Jim too far gone to carry it off.

Even the gossips could not embellish the horrid finish—a brazen, giggling woman of the streets on Jim's arm when he lurched into his wife on the Dover platform. . . .

Happy was off and settled in her little New York flat almost before Jim came out of his daze and into the light

again. Alice believes that he did come out then, at once and for always. I believe it, too. . . .

Happy did not write him even a word of good-by. She left a message for Alice to deliver.

"There is but one thing in *your* power to help me. Let me never see you again."

Alice is a Spencer of the right sort. She told me that she dared not kiss anything so frozen as Happy but that she had said,

"Be sure I shall deliver the message with less mercy than you would!"

For the Spencer women, being a hero does not cover a multitude of sins. Alice is all Spencer except her dear faithful blue eyes. They are the O'Heartley eyes—like Jim's.

Happy's eyes are dappled and deep-pooled and London-smoke color and they are always daring you to look through them—if you can! And if you catch them off guard they are always far away from you and sad. . . . Which will about do for Happy's eyes. Numerous minor and two major poets have tried a hand at them and missed. I am only a case-hardened barrister.

As to her mouth, why that has the baby curves left in the middle, also the tender corners. Also it smiles often enough to make you forget the sorry questions in her eyes. Besides you are nearly always waiting to see her teeth which are far too pretty to eat with, though she herself "dotes" on good things to eat and feeds us priceless little dinners in her shipshape flat.

Furthermore, she cooks the greater part of the dinner herself because she assures us that the maid gets "too

mussed up" to serve if she lets her help much in the cooking.

Which seems illogical in the light of Happy's own edible appearance in immaculate frills and fluffies and infinitesimal satin slippers—white at that, on the very stroke of the hour at which she invited you to dine.

But if Happy tells you that it is so, why it *is*. Whether it is the statistics of Child Labor which she confides so prettily to a National Commission or the dictum that "petticoats are in again," "Believe Happy at the go-off" I tell the family. "It will save time and worry." Usually, however, they take a certain period to recover from the shock of Happy's successive leaps to meet Progress more than half way.

Princess Patricia's Pets

The afternoon that the Princess Patricia's Battalion broke camp in the Park and entrained at the Grand Trunk Station we were in a group on the balcony over the porte cochere of the Chateau Laurier.

The men came down Parliament Hill route-stepping, the veteran's swing and saunter because over six hundred of them wore service ribbons on their chests.

Some of the men bit hard on the under jaw but most of them wore smiles of one kind or another.

Often a man waved his cap to answer a greeting from the curb or turned back to keep his smile turned on a tense-faced woman.

But nearly all of the women down on the sidewalk and on our balcony wore their smiles incessantly. A few of them

were stiff-set, still they were the "cheering them on" sort of smiles the Empire expects of her women today.

But Happy was not smiling nor was a young officer chap not long married. He and the bride had dined with us the night before. He kept his eyes on a bedroom window high up in the front of the Hotel and waved a hand to it continuously. Happy waved a hand up there, too. So I looked up to catch the vision of a pretty arm and a pink handkerchief, waving. The other hand was tight clenched and beating a tight closed mouth. But the window curtain was quickly pulled over the face and only the waving handkerchief was still visible to us and to Donald, just turning into the train shed.

Through gritted teeth Happy whispered to me,

"Donald is a dear boy! I hope that he will be killed. Easiest for Dora in the end. I wish that I had the courage to go up there and tell her."

My hand gripped tight on letters in my pocket. If that was the way she felt about it—about Jim, then it was decided already.

She had pointed a finger to show the way out of my indecision to help me where I was floundering in the net of responsibility,—the unfair trap that Jim had prepared for me. His letter to me, and a letter from Alice had come by the same post that morning.

II

I had read and reread them,—Alice's letter to me and Jim's letter to me—tried to get light without doing the impossible thing Jim had demanded—that I read his letter to Happy,—an enclosed, unsealed letter. I was to deliver this letter only if I thought it best for her. I was to destroy it if there was the least chance that it might cast a shadow on any present happiness of hers,—if it seemed to me best to leave her in a state of complete disgust with his share in her life. The deed to their garden house in Kensington and the bank draft I was to give her whenever I saw fit.

"At any time, at her divorce or at her wedding," my instructions read.

The draft was on the Bank of Montreal and with the bonds was a matter of twelve thousand pounds.

My letter called it "A niggardly payment on account of what I owe her in mere money these last ten years of non-support. But it is all that I could cash in on short orders and all I am sure about save three hundred pounds a year to keep me from begging of Alice in case I am disabled and not killed."

There was no other word of excuse, no history of the blank years. After a poignant space he had written it.

"The rest of this is an *order* to you—you have no choice. Read the enclosed letter to Happy and for G—d's sake do not take the chance of letting me be an unwelcome ghost

at any feast of hers. I know that your judgment and—(here was a word heavily crossed) cannot go wrong for her. I know how you will hate reading the enclosed but I cannot risk hurting her again.

Good by if—and more thanks than I know how to say.

JIM.

Alice's letter was long, full of dashes, criss-crossed, unlike her in every way. Evidently Jim's arrival had been a cataclysm.

"Dear Dick,

"Jim has been and gone! Was here a week before the Fourth and gone yesterday. I think that they may be in France today. He had meant to go back to Africa by Saturday's boat. As soon as the War Office examined him, of course they wanted to give him his rank. But he would take only a captaincy and in infantry. Odd, wasn't it? You know how he loved his guns!

But he is under his own name since last week—our name, thank Heaven! Captain (not Colonel) James Chetwoode York-Spencer. He says that he has been keeping it in the dark and scrubbing it for ten years. That he knows it is guaranteed to stay clean the rest of his life. Not that anybody could question the ten years record—after seeing Jim today. Splendid, isn't a big enough word for him now. Muscles hard and fit. All day work, he says. And his brain the keenest, coolest ever. Absolutely up in the latest knowledge and world-movement kind of thing, as if he had been in it or ahead of it all instead of out in the African wilds. "Book work nights" is all I got out of him. But he has one book published, two years ago—that awfully talked about anonymous "Economics and the Empire." And there

is a new one coming under his own name and the other one to be acknowledged.

The new one is "Empire and Gold" or something like that. I shall not be able to make head nor tail of it but I lied beautifully about the other book. Told him that I took it to bed nights. So I did. It never failed in all the week he was here. I went to sleep instantly. He told me that he had not gambled for ten years. That cards would bore him to extinction.

He is whole lives, a whole era beyond that wreck of himself who came back from the Boer war. But he disciplines himself cruelly. A scientific, efficient kind of a human body machine.

Only one cigar after dinner. I teased him about that weakness. His answer was the first word of her.

"Yes," he said, "it is an indulgence. But Happy used to like the smell. I have allowed myself to have it these two years back."

And not a drop, Dick! Not a drop since that awful minute on the Dover platform. But he is heart-breaking —about Happy I mean. At last he spoke often of her— as if she had never gone, as if the years between their wonderful years and now had not been. She is so alive to him, so near.

Eight years you know since he paid off all the liens and things on their dear little house. It has always been let furnished—I had always looked after it and did not know what to do about it. And now the tenants are to go and I am to try to put into the old order—Happy's way! I do not know why—for Jim *means* to be killed. Though, naturally, he isn't saying it. But I am praying so hard perhaps—

"I' like to think of that little Heaven-spot just waiting—the way she liked it."

Was all that he said. Who says that we English aren't romantic?

I dared not ask if I might write it all to you. He would have said "no." But if he dies, or is wounded, you will tell Happy—all? Remember, Dick, he is simply the very best sort that there is! No man could be finer or stronger than Jim now! Only too still and and a kind of stern gentleness. And that darling mouth of his! It looks as if he could not imagine himself deserving any sort of happiness! Oh Dick! If—if——

But I hear nothing of Happy. Last year the New York Allans said that they were sure that she had not divorced Jim. That everybody supposed him to be dead. I said nothing. That seemed best for her. If I had seen Jim then I should not have been able to resist bragging about him. If only she wanted him to be alive! There could never be anyone but Happy for Jim. You *know!* The Spencers are "one-man dogs" aren't they Dick? Faithful hearted, whatever else they may be! And that was an O'Heartley trait too. Never a second wife in the wild lot of them. Doubtless though, they sent a few to early graves for love of them!

This is a fearful sentimental mess of a letter. But I am heart-achey today. London is too dreary! There are no words to tell how sad we are—under the skin. Come when it is over, Dick. I shall want to see any Spencers who may be left! For five years back I have been gloating over the larky month that you gave this lone widow-woman. I never dreamed that London could be such sport. I know that you will answer, telling me more than I dare to ask.

You are always my first cousin, though I fancy it's really a third?

Alice Gordon-Gordon.

With these letters under my hand Happy spoke the first bitter words that I had ever heard from her. They were like a sign post leading away from Jim. And Ran had been beaming these last days. Happy was kinder. Sir Pierce had been a week in Montreal on war office business —all the same he should have been on his way to the Front—and Ran had made headway. For years past he has always done what he calls "Proposing to her in public." But of late his statements of his intentions have been more explicit,—dated, as it were.

Sometimes Happy pulls him up on the curb, more often she just chaffs him.

"Oh! Ran doesn't do it differently from any other American man," she tells us.

"They all make love in public and say nothing about it in private. When the American man has told you about it in terms of flowers—ordered by telephone from the florist—you have to take the rest for granted—fill in the blanks with imaginary remarks of an affectionate nature. American men are not lovers—that is all."

"Well," said Ran in the sulks. "What does your prize-package Englishman talk about? As far as I can see he just sits and glares unless he is 'explaining beet sugar, or why the English must wear their hats in Parliament or what he would advise you to do for a colt with the colic.' "

"Ran, you are indecent. Not that Sir Pierce has such an idea as *me* in his head."

(*Yells from Ran and the family.*) She went on.

"But an Englishman does *feel* it—when he has it, and makes you feel it. Our men merely go through the motions of being in love and we American women are finding out that we have missed something."

This didn't really hit Ran. He is nervous and jumpy when Happy is not there and a bit silly when she is. All the worst symptoms of a bad case. And it looks as if she ought to marry Ran, as if she were beginning to "care."

That afternoon when we were seeing the battalion "off" he came over to us just as Happy hissed out that little whisper of Destiny's prompting. She had patted his coat sleeve when he pointed out the Duke and the Duchess and Princess Patricia down on the curbstone, elbowed by the crowd and only now and again saluted by a marching officer who chanced to catch sight of the Duke's khaki.

Their Royal Highnesses seemed "nice" and "democratic" to Ran. I left him to share the niceness and the democratic savour with Happy.

2

Never so much in my life did I wish that I had the habit of prayer. I wanted to pray over that letter. No merely human creature with prejudices and a profession could decide a thing like that.

It was now September. Happy had asked my advice about the quietest way to manage the divorce and asked me not to speak to Ran about it. But even then I could not read Jim's letter. I was just plain "funking" it, waiting for a more direct "leading."

Sir Pierce had come back to Ottawa that week and

Happy was devoting more time to him, seemed to like to sit quietly with him.

"I've seen a lot of him in the last five years," she said. "And I like him more than ever. He rests me."

"Yes. He is as reposeful as Woodlawn cemetery!" said Ran.

Ran's face looked like a handbook of all the more painful methods of committing murder. But he had to take it. Happy was threatening to pack him off if "he didn't behave." But she was interested in *his* sulks—and his love-making. . . .

It was after dinner and we had the Terrace to ourselves,—a miracle of a night in dark-blue velvet, and wearing some especially good diamond stars over the Towers on Parliament Hill.

Happy says that it seems unfair to all the other hotels in the world—that stage setting of the Chateau Laurier with the wooded cliff of the Hill and the Rideau Canal and the wide River and the Park, not to mention all the rest of Upper Canada for a back-drop. She is always running to the parapet to watch the little boats climb up hill through the locks and we were there at the moment, because a launch was just slipping through the top gates.

I had just called her attention to the fact that Canadian stars are larger than other stars, when she said it—pricked the sore spot where my secret was festering.

"Dick, hasn't Ran been just too dear and—and—*human* —these last days?"

We had been over to the Plattsburg Centenary—in Ran's cars—of course——

"Dick, what do you really think about Ran—deep, true

'thinks' I mean? I'm—O! Help a fellah to think straight, Dick! Ran must go away this Winter or I—I. . . ."

"You are an outrageous little flirt and you are old enough to know better!" I said.

It slipped off her because she isn't—neither a flirt nor old enough to know better—nobody is ever old enough for that.

"But I love Ran! I adore you all! That is the trouble—I love every one of you!"

She said it with a funny, cuddling little gesture all her own. It is something different she does with her hands—not like anybody's movements.

But that is the truth, the open secret of Happy's irresistibleness. She does love *us* and not just our love for her. She does not simply feed her vanity on our devotion but feels that way about us, loves us in return. In every way but one. That way is so high-barred and well-posted that we make no mistakes. We do not run our heads into the wall on that side. Happy has the gift of the comrade heart, the playfellow spirit as no other beautiful woman ever had it. And come to think of it, very likely only a beautiful woman could have it perfectly, without envy or bitterness.

We went back to the others under the lights of the awning. Sir Pierce was smoking, his mythological profile turned to Mother and Lutie, deep in the home papers. We had made Ottawa in time for a late dinner. Ran was reading a Montreal paper. He seemed in desperate earnest over something, gnawed at his cigar, worried his thumb with his fingers and fussed in his pockets. He started, I thought, to say something to me but turned the movement into lighting another cigar before he burrowed again in the

paper. "I dare say the financial news makes him afraid that he might miss one or two millions he thinks he ought to make this year." . . . I remember telling myself. Mother and Lutie were giving us the press accounts of the Plattsburgh affair, filling in the interstices in their memory. They, and Sir Pierce, were in a glow of international good feeling.

Mother relieved her emotional stress by saying,

"It was all too touching! And such a lesson to the world *now!* Do read this Happy—you read so beautifully!"

And Happy fell for it—read us a bit of the commemoration speech that we had thought struck the finest note of the lot.

Happy did not spare us any of the thrills. She has that kind of a voice and a supernatural witchery in using it to the best advantage, for any purpose she likes. Her purpose, at the moment, I guessed, was to make war detestable and Peace heavenly; also I noted, that after the first few phrases she was making it up as she went along. I had been only ten feet distant from the distinguished orator who made that heart-pricking speech at Plattsburg and although he had said high and wonderful things he had not "got off" the speech Happy was giving us with scenic effects now.

When she got really into her stride, Mother broke in—

"Why, Dearest, I don't remember that part!"

And Happy said, making a moue at me behind the paper because of my stern, reproachful expression.

"Don't interrupt Darlingest Muzzie! Just listen! And weep all you want to. But mind! Dick! No sniffles from *you!*"

"Huh!" I snorted, but you couldn't stop her.

Besides she seemed to be deep in it, under the surface of

her tricks and improvisation. She always does with us what she will so we were back with her in that old graveyard at Plattsburg yearning in a pleasant surge of sentiment over the dead who have lain there, comfortably enough no doubt, these hundred years back.

Only Ran was out of tune, refused to be carried with her. He scowled insultingly at the fine dome of our Library of Parliament, and rustled his newspaper. Almost swore when Happy pulled out the vox humana stop in her voice. I kicked him in the shins but without visible effect. It was a dark Cimmerian grouch. I decided to let him stay lost in it. Happy on a high horse is too good to lose. She was getting the starlight in her eyes and taking catchy little breaths the way she does when her "better feelings" are about to get the best of her.

She held the paper wide spread before her face and began again after an oratorical pause of impressive weight.

"Always, all over the world, with civilised peoples as with savages, it has been a custom, in some countries a religion, to speak well of the dead. We are come together here today for that reverent purpose—to speak well of the Dead, of those who, for a long time have been honorably, gloriously, most generously, dead! For these men, whether British or American, whom we foregather here to celebrate, give their lives to their country.

NOT THEN, NOR NOW, NOR ANYWHERE, CAN A MAN GIVE MORE THAN HIS LIFE.

These HEROES lying here seem very real presences—"Heroes! Heroes, indeed." They who forded the river at midnight, they who kept the bridges, they who fought out there on the Saratoga after her whole starboard battery was silenced——"

"But—tah! But—tah—Mrs. Spencer—ah—th—that you know was a trick—a neat little Yankee trick. That warping her about business—I'll explain——"

"O!" *Now* it's you Sir Pierce!" wailed Happy. Sir Pierce leaned toward her, eager, courteous but bound to set her right in the matter of British seamanship.

"O!" Sir Pierce! How could you interrupt me just when it was going so beautifully! Muzzie mopping her eyes and everybody enjoying themselves over those graves! But I suppose a whipping is a hard thing to take gracefully. Still, I did think that everybody—even *you* Sir Pierce admitted by this time that the British suffered a bit of a fiasco at Plattsburg. And *just* as I was coming to something so kind about the British! Here it is——"

She elevated that deluded newspaper to hide her wickedness.

"And today, remembering so many heroes who achieved, whose place in history is marked by stars and crowned by Fame, let us not forget to commemorate the UNSUCCESSFUL—those Heroes who went to their sleep—or their eternal rest, that night, without the solace of Victory."

"Huh! Humph! Heroes!" It was Ran this time. "I'm dead sick of 'em. A hero's just any old skate with a bad case of itching ego. A chap with a yearn to see his Little Self come out on top—even if it kills him. Never met a hero myself who wasn't several blends of blackguard when he wasn't doing his hero-stunts."

"How horrid, you are, Ran!" said Happy, as if she meant it.

Somehow it was horrid, not impersonal. Rather as if he wanted Happy to remember and despise one especial, nameable hero. At the very least, it wasn't as big as Ran

looks as if he ought to be. Nor could it help him along the way that he wanted to go. Nor could I make out for the life of me why he was stupid enough to let himself "break" like that. He is under a strain and showing it. But this was crass, asinine. Happy would not miss its full import—nor fail to realise the revelation of something hard, ugly under his generous spread of surface.

And Ran never loses a shade of anybody's meaning, least of all, of Happy's. He is the shrewdest man playing for first place in the American money game. This was the only fool move I ever knew him to make.

I was hot in the collar, too. The letters burned in my breast pocket. Alice's words were almost out of my mouth.

"No man could be finer than Jim now. Remember, Dick, he is simply the best there is!"

I wanted to fling it in Ran's face. Stand up and fight him for it—for Jim and Jim's old "hero-stunts." And I knew that I was face to face with it for the last time—that I must read Jim's letter to Happy instantly. Ran might be out of it after this. I knew what was going on under Happy's still eyes that she kept turned on him. But Sir Pierce—one guess was as good as another now. But she has said that she would never go back to England. . . .

Ran tightened his lips and Happy took her sombre eyes away from him. She tried to make it easier for the rest of us—sent out a gay little trill of a laugh.

"We are off the key. Let us get on again. The Entente Cordiale part of this speech is what we need." She began again to read, or invent,—for a minute. I couldn't pull myself together well enough to find out which; my befogged wits were anchored over one spot, Jim's letter to

her and the fact that I must read it at once and decide for or against giving it to her, now, within the hour.

I heard Happy's beautiful low tones sound a few words, then I began to follow.

"The celebration on this occasion of the long peace between us caries with it a beautiful thought, for the world's ultimate symbol of civilisation, the most significant monument to Peace, is not that idle Palace at the Hague; it is a monument not made by hands, not visible to the eye, though it is big enough for all men to see and as high as Heaven is high—a monument for all peoples to note and to emulate—yet a monument that is only an imaginary line —four thousand miles long—the line that is the border between the two greatest nations of Earth, *a border without a fort, without a ship, without an armed man* to preserve its integrity,—

God keep it ever defenseless save for our hands clasped across it in friendship."

Happy gave one of her little paws to mother and one to Lutie. But Ran didn't make any signal of international amity in my direction or in Lovelly's.

He continued to stab with his stick at a perfect specimen of his bootmaker's art. Muzzie was still sopping her eyes.

Sir Pierce was clearing his throat of something which he quite evidently resented as an intrusion upon his personal privacy.

"However did we miss all that part?" he said. I heard an awfully good bit of oratin' stuff, I must say, but I didn't hear quite that you've just been readin'."

"No," said Happy as innocently as a baby saying, "Now I lay me,"

"There wasn't very much of a report of Plattsburg in this paper. I knew that Adopted Muzzie would be disappointed so I made most of it up as I went along." Shall I do some more for you? And what subject please?"

I returned her hand to her. Ran had folded his newspaper into a tight oblong and was getting up to "See about some telegrams," he said.

One of those wordless wireless messages that we none of us believe in but all get at one time or another, clicked in my brain.

"There is something in that Montreal paper Ran doesn't want us to see."

That seemed ridiculous for any and everybody reads a newspaper. It could not be a secret that Ran hoped to keep to himself indefinitely. Feeling like a bit of a fool I stretched a hand and took the paper.

"If you are through with it, give me a look in, Ran!" I said as casually as you do say that sort of thing.

Ran's face flooded with crimson. His eyes corkscrewed mine. Then he slumped back in his chair. I thought that he did not speak because he could not. No one else seemed to see all this. The other four were deep in talking over Plattsburg—the personalities and functions. Sir Pierce was chortling over Mother who insisted that she had had "The time of her life." Happy was recounting what she called Mother's victims.

"After that first banquet four generals, three Colonels, one senator, one Chief Justice and uncounted "Also presents" were struggling to talk to her at once, weren't they Lutie?" That charming Senator with the beard asked me

for her hand but I discouraged him. Told him that he would only be about twenty-three on Muzzie's waiting list and that she was not thinking of marrying for some years yet."

"Dick make this imp hold her saucy tongue. She has no respect for my age and widowhood. Puts all her own sins on my old shoulders."

"Susan Maria," said I. "You can't throw dust in our unspoiled Canadian eyes. We noted your unseemly behaviour. . . ."

I was saying anything that came first while I ran over the headlines. The flash of the message had died down by this time. I told myself that I had imagined Ran's upset. There was nothing sensational in the New York financial news.

I read the usual war heads and turned the page for the London Special Correspondent.

"Want the London letter?" It is headlined,"

"England needs officers. Loss of officers the Big Peril." I stopped this and skipped. But very likely it was over-squeamishness on my part. Sir Pierce sent forth his smoke rings at about the same number per minute and kept his serene Du Maurier countenance turned as always, full on Happy. I was led to suppose, from his serenity, that when he got ready to go to the front he would go. If his reasons for not yet being there were satisfactory to him, the voice of the whole British Empire raised, as one man, in protest, would convince him of nothing save of the British Empire's impertinence. Nevertheless, he ought to go to the Front. And Happy ought to tell him so. Happy could do it. Happy, you see, is not the whole British Empire. She is—is—just Happy.

And Sir Pierce ought to be grateful that she is. If she were not unspoiled and without any conceit of conquest he would be making himself pretty darned ridiculous. He sits up and begs or plays dead whenever she flicks so much as an eyelash in his direction. And "Headquarters" is beginning to watch her with anxiety. Since that morning I had happened to know—via Government House, there were already inquiries from K. of K. as to why Sir Pierce Lovelly had not yet followed in person his contribution of five thousand pounds. It was my first news of the fund, and I was glad. But it shed light on the unpatriotic extravagance of being devoted to Happy.

Looking over the headlines for something less personal than "OFFICERS NEEDED" I read out the next capitals.

"London now ringing with the name of the hero who blew up the railway bridge. The censor has allowed his name to be given out."

"Oh!" said Lutie. "That was wonderful. Go on Dick!"

"Aw! Quit this Sunday-school class," said Ran. "Come along to the telegraph office with me. I've something I want to get off my chest."

There was no doubt about his being upset. But, obviously, it was his money game. He did not turn to see if I had followed him. In half a minute his big stride had taken him through the door into the corridor.

"Read it, Dick," said Happy. "Ran will be an hour over those wires. He corresponds by wire. Never forgets to tell me about the weather in his telegrams. Besides, Dick, your financial advice would be a disaster to anybody. You would die in an "Home for Ancient and Indigent Bachelors" if Lutie didn't do your investing for you."

All of which idle talk convinces me that there is no such

thing as idle talk. All speech is but the surface bubbling of some deeper current running toward a predestined end.

It all had to come in just that way, in that light—the light of Ran's hatefulness, the spot-light of high emotion.

Happy's old sensitive memories had to be seared, burned out—struck by lightning.

This made me none the less a blockhead of the woodenest.

I began to read:

"On Thursday London was agog with the story of the officer who penetrated the enemy's line by swimming a river, wading swamps, evading the outposts and succeeded in blowing up a railway bridge vital to the enemy's supply trains.

A sergeant's letter—the Censor let us have it without names—said that "it took them twelve hours to get over four canals and a swamp before they reached the river which he could not swim, the current being too strong for him, but not for the officer who swam it with virtually nothing on him but the explosive and fuse tied in a rubber cap on his head. The officer landed in a swamp, ploughed through the mud, found his bridge and set his fuse. When the explosion came he had fifteen minutes start in the swamp before the enemy's patrol began to fire into it. After another twelve hours he got back to the serjeant, his clothes and three biscuits. That night they requisitioned two invalided bicycles, coffee, cheese and a bottle of wine, which the sergeant says that he alone drank as the officer was a "teetote."

Unfortunately to-day's report says that he has since been seriously, though it is hoped not fatally, wounded.

The Boer war got him a V. C., but that priceless little four-pence-hapenny cross of the Major's will certainly

swing from yet another bar. His name is in every mouth in England to-day.

"Major (formerly Colonel) James Chetwoode York"—I broke off but it was of no use. Sir Pierce finished automatically.

"York-Spencer, redivivus, by Jove!"

For him during about thirty seconds the name seemed to have no connection with Happy. The English brain is so superbly national and single-minded! But nobody bothered with Sir Pierce's brain processes.

Mother was speechless. She clasped her hands tight on Happy's knee. Lutie spoke after she had glanced at Happy's face,—but one word only.

"Jim!"

Happy's mouth was firm and her chin high. Her eyes looked as if they saw a resurrection happening before them.

My weak kneed struggle to decide for her was over. But I wanted quick action. Also I wanted to get around to Ran's case of herophobia.

"Come up into the writing rom, Happy. I have some letters for you. Lovelly, go down into the grill room and feed the others something. I'll be there to fetch them presently." At the minute, acting under orders was good for Lovelly—Poor Devil!"

We were alone in the long Mezzanine foyer of the Chateau. I put Happy in a big chair.

"Here is Alice's letter to me. Read it first. And here is Jim's letter to me. There is another. Perhaps I shall not give it to you. The enclosures are in my safe. The draft is for twelve thousand pounds."

She said nothing but her eyes were luminous. She began to read Alice's letter. I went to the far end of the room

and took out Jim's letter to Happy. There seemed to be no way out of it, so I read it.

It had no beginning.

"I have ordered Dick to read this because he is not tc give it to you if you might, by any chance, be happier without it.

Perhaps it is a bit weak of me, but I do not want to go tc the Front without telling you what I sometimes think—dare to think—you know without the telling—that there was never the least shadow of truth in any woman story—that the poor creature you saw that last day was merely trying to be kind to a beast.

I hate stirring up this vile mud. But whatever nasty stain maybe on our life that sort of stain is not there. I thought that in case I do not turn up—after the scrap—there might be a bare chance of your being glad to have me tell you this. Naturally I had not meant to come to life again, but the war puts a new responsibility on a soldier. England needs trained men. I shall hope for a lucky chance to get some of the old tarnish rubbed off the name. Dick will tell you about the little that I am now able to offer on account of all my indebtedness to you. Of course, if you choose, you are to sell the house. It is unencumbered now. I should never be able to bring myself to the point of parting with it.

J. C. Y.-S.

I sat, looking deep into life when Happy rushed upon me.

"Jim's letter, Dick! O! Dickie! How could you? Why didn't you—at once? But I know. You thought that I wasn't worth it all. Two men dangling sickened you. Ugh! Right you were! O! Dick! All those splendid ten

years of his! And all the while I was a self-righteous, stiff-necked little fool! He was ill—just weak and ill, that dreadful year! And I didn't stand by! Little fool—fool!—

"You are a little fool now," I said, "Of course it was only your bolting that stiffened him, made him sit up and face himself."

I gave her the letter. She cuddled it under her chin.

"I'm not good enough to read it. I'll just keep it to pray to."

Thereupon, seating herself, she began at once to read it. I had already started to go downstairs.

She called after me, and no quavers in her voice at that—

"Please come back for me in ten minutes. Take me down to the family."

When I got back she was not there. I found her in the grill rom. Ran, mummified, was seated opposite to her.

The orchestra began a medley of national airs. It does this at least three times an evening since the Fourth of August so that we are all quite used to holding a cooling mouthful on a fork while we stand up for **OUR OWN.**

After the Marseillaise and a fury of rapid fire clapping we had the "Star Spangled Banner." At the next table a near-lady with one of those imported accents, I don't know which one and I don't think she does—said,

"I rarther fawncy that's that Amierrr'c'n thing, isint it—tah?

Happy arose from her chair—with her back to the near-lady—

"Up! Up! All of you. I have been on my feet for yours all summer. Up for mine now. You have all got to be very polite to America for a little while now."

Ran looked at her with a tremendous question in his eyes. I saw his hand trembling. Evidently he did not know yet. He roared out the few words of his National anthem with which he had a speaking acquaintance and made a mighty noise on as many of the rest of the notes as he could reach.

We are all rather solemn when it comes to ours nowadays. But Happy's eyes were shining—shining soft, not hard, and she was the first on her feet when the music began. One or two table took up the words. Then the whole room sang with a boom in the voices, "GOD SAVE THE KING!" and Happy's voice topped the others. Her radiance made me think of Condillac's phrase.

"The first time that we see light, we are it, rather than see it!" That comes near telling how she looked.

"Dearest Adopted Muzzie! But this is my country too. Nothing between us but that Undefended Border. *You* know!"

And Mother seemed to know.

Happy made her good night speeches. First one to me —for a wonder.

"Dick, please hurry about my transportation. No matter which boat. Just the quickest over—Quebec or New York. Will you see about the cables—now?"

"Come early in the morning, Lutie. I shall be packed and keeping my last minutes for Muzzie and you."

She turned to Sir Pierce.

"I'm sure you're through with killing time, aren't you? Of course we've all guessed—it was your Division command you've been waiting for? But you will be in a hurry too —soon. Now that my husband is wounded I shall be getting over as quickly as possible—naturally."

Sir Pierce took it standing. Nothing outside of him changed much but I fear that something inside him changed a good bit.

"Naturally! Naturally!" he repeated in an automatic talking-machine voice that scratched on my nerves.

The look that I got at Ran didn't make me want another. Happy did not look at all, threw him a little wave of her hand.

"Nightie till tomorrow, Ran. I am going to ask you to do a heap of cousinly chores in our home town."

Here Sir Pierce got his own voice into commission more or less.

"I dessay I shall be gettin' off by your boat, too. I've a note from the Duke this afternoon. He hears that I've my division. But whether or no, we've all jolly well got to get in—wherever we're by way of bein' put. I fancy they are needin' us old 'uns at the Front."

We were out in the corridor then. Happy took Sir Pierce's hand and clung long to it. Mother had her other one. If she had had another perhaps she would have given it to me.

"Sir Pierce you are splendid! Splendid, my countrymen! All of you—all splendid!" She looked right over me.

In big moments everybody does.

If the recruiting officer finds you stiff-jointed from a bullet in a long-ago war that everybody else has forgotten and you are nondescript in your general appearance, naturally, you can't expect to have a big minute of your own. You can only hope to be "in" at other person's "big Minutes."

But I shall have the fun of delivering Happy in person And to Jim.

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